

Suggested Remarks
Steve Edminster, USAID/OEDG
Three-in-One Book Launching of the
Philippine Supreme Court
Sampaguita Ballroom, Manila Hotel
December 15, 2005, 10:00 a.m.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr.

Justice Adolfo Azcuna

Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

On behalf of the United States Agency for
International Development (USAID), I am
delighted to join you this morning in the
launching of the three books entitled,
Manual on Judicial Strengthening for the

Supreme Court of the Philippines, Gender Sensitivity in the Family Courts, and Engendering the Judiciary.

I particularly would like to congratulate the Supreme Court of the Philippines, the Project Management Office, and the authors of the books we are launching today for a job well done. USAID supported the development and publication of the books through The Asia Foundation because we believe they are important contributions to the Philippine judiciary's continued efforts to implement court reforms, which we strongly support.

The Manual on Judicial Writing is designed to provide guidance to legal researchers on

the basic rules on form in decision-writing. It will be distributed to the Supreme Court Justices and their staff lawyers, and legal researchers. An electronic copy will also be available at the Supreme Court and the APJR (Action Program for Judicial Reform) Websites. We hope that the book will be a useful reference in drafting decisions, opinions, memoranda and other legal documents.

Gender, is at the core of USAID's programming and we are very pleased to have had this opportunity to support the Philippine judiciary in its efforts to be more responsive to the needs of women, particularly when it comes to the justice system and the Action Program for Judicial

Reform. It is our hope that the two books, Gender in the Family Courts and Engendering the Judiciary, will help address the causes and manifestations of gender bias, not only in the treatment of female lawyers and judges, but in the treatment of female litigants and witnesses.

A judiciary that is meticulous in its presentation of high quality and well-written decisions and also vigilant in its handling of gender and development issues in court proceedings and policies is certainly worthy of its stature as a showcase of judicial reform.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to affirm our belief in the

great future that lies ahead for the Philippine Judiciary even as the torch of leadership which shone brilliantly under the stewardship of Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr. is about to be passed to his successor. We are honored to be able to continue contributing to that future.

Congratulations to all those who made this event possible.

Mabuhay at Maraming Salamat po!